

## **CITY COUNCIL MEETING MONDAY, JUNE 25, 2007**

A regular meeting of City Council was held on the above date for the transaction of general business.

Vaughn D. Spencer, President of Council, called the meeting to order.

The invocation was given by Rev. Phillip Keevil, First Presbyterian Church.

All present pledged to the flag.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Council President Spencer  
Councilor Fuhs, District 1  
Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, District 2  
Councilor Sterner, District 3  
Councilor Marmarou, District 4  
Councilor Baez, District 5  
Councilor Waltman, District 6

Managing Director L. Churchill  
City Auditor D. Cituk  
City Solicitor C. Younger  
City Clerk L. Kelleher  
Public Works Director C. Jones

### **PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

#### **Council Commendation:**

City Council issued a commendation for the Reading is Fundamental Program, accepted by Fire Marshall Todd Yeager and Debbie Kopetsky from the Reading School District.

#### **Mayoral Proclamations:**

None.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Council President Spencer announced that three citizens were registered to address Council on non-agenda matters. He inquired if Council wished to suspend the public speaking rules to allow all those registered to speak at this point in the meeting. As no one objected, the public speaking rules were suspended.

Lori Knockstead, of Olive Street, expressed her support of the service provided by the Call Center, but described her recent problem with receiving incorrect information from a Call Center employee. She noted the need for Call Center employees to have better training on City Department procedures, laws and regulations and as generalists. She also reported that upon visiting the Codes Division to report a complaint, a Codes clerk told her that complaints were not taken by the Codes Division any longer. She was then directed to the Call Center, where she was told that the Call Center only takes phone calls, not walk-ins. She also described the continuing problems with rental properties in the Albright area of District 4, which is zoned R2.

Robert Trotta was not present.

Steven Burkey, of North 9th Street, asked Council to consider taking legislative action to oppose abortions in Reading and to remove the clinic located on South 4th Street.

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES**

Council President Spencer asked Council to consider the minutes for the June 11th regular meeting and the June 12th special meeting, and the agenda for this meeting including the resolution listed under the consent agenda heading. He noted the need to amend the agenda to include an ordinance to change the salary range of the Finance Director, which will support the ordinance increasing the salary of the Finance Director.

**Councilor Sterner moved, seconded by Councilor Marmarou, to approve the minutes from the June 11th regular meeting, the June 12th special meeting and the agenda as amended including the resolution listed under the consent agenda heading. The motion was approved unanimously.**

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

**Resolution 77-2007** - approving an application to Penn Dot for the installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of North 13th and Elm Streets (**Traffic Engineering**)

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

Managing Director Churchill apologized for the lapse experienced by Ms. Knockstead with the Codes Division and the Call Center. He highlighted the report distributed to Council at the meeting covering:

- the beginning of the 2008 budget process
- the completion of the external audit for the 2007 fiscal year
- the opening of the curfew center

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz inquired about the capacity of the curfew center. She requested that the Administration supply a report on the curfew center in one month.

Captain Shafer reported that the capacity is unknown at this time and will be determined as it is used. He stated that the expected kinks with the center will be worked out during the center's first month of use.

Councilor Baez inquired about the expected hours of operation. Captain Shafer replied that the center will be used 3 days per week: Friday night, Saturday night and one other rotating evening during the week.

Council President Spencer warned the Administration to avoid profiling when enforcing the curfew ordinance.

## **AUDITOR'S REPORT**

City Auditor Dave Cituk read the report distributed to Council at the meeting covering the following topics:

- 1 2007 Admissions Tax collection
- 2 2007 Transfer Tax collections
- 3 Update on the 2006 External Audit

## **ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE**

**Bill No. 43-** amending the 2007 General Fund budget to increase the

appropriation to BCTV to \$170,000.00, from \$160,000.00. **(Managing Director) Introduced at the 05/29/07 meeting of Council; has not satisfied the two week layover period and must remain on the table until the 06/25/07 meeting of Council.**

**Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to enact Bill 43-2007.**

Managing Director Churchill explained that Administration's negotiation of the renewal of the contract with BCTV will increase the annual allocation for BCTV's management of the municipal access channel by \$10,000 in the first year and \$5,000 each subsequent year.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz stated this issue was reviewed and discussed at the June Finance Committee Meeting.

Councilor Baez announced that she will abstain from this vote, as advised by the City Solicitor, due to her participation on the BCTV Program Committee.

**Bill 43-2007 was enacted by the following vote:**

**Yea: Fuhs, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer President – 6.**

**Nay: None – 0.**

**Abstain: Baez - 1.**

**Bill No. 44-** approving a Capital Grant to BCTV, in the amount of \$192,422.00. **(Managing Director) Introduced at the 05/29/07 meeting of Council; has not satisfied the two week layover period and must remain on the table until the 06/25/07 meeting of Council.**

**Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to enact Bill 43-2007.**

Managing Director Churchill stated that this is a one-time appropriation that will give BCTV the ability to upgrade equipment supporting the MAC Channel. This revenue was received from Comcast through the City's negotiation of the Comcast Contract, approved in January of this year. A list of equipment to be purchased can be found in the June Finance Committee Meeting Report.

Councilor Fuhs stated that although he supports the MAC Channel, he will not support this appropriation as he believes the money should be used to provide support for the City's basic public service needs.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz expressed her belief in the educational programming provided by BCTV. She requested that BCTV follow the City's procurement procedures when purchasing this capital equipment. Managing Director Churchill assured Council that BCTV will follow the City's procurement procedures.

**Bill 44-2007 was enacted by the following vote:**

**Yea: Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Waltman, – 4.**

**Nay: Fuhs, Spencer President – 2.**

**Abstain: Baez - 1.**

**Bill No. 45-** renewing a contract with BCTV, for a period of seven years; with the contract beginning in the amount of \$170,000.00 and increasing by \$5,000.00 annually over the length of the agreement. **(Managing Director) Introduced at the 05/29/07 meeting of Council; has not satisfied the two week layover period and must remain on the table until the 06/25/07 meeting of Council.**

**Councilor Sterner moved, seconded by Councilor Marmarou, to enact Bill 45-2007.**

Managing Director Churchill stated that through negotiations by the Administration, the BCTV contract has been renewed through 2013.

**Bill 45-2007 was enacted by the following vote:**

**Yea: Fuhs, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer President – 6.**

**Nay: None – 0.**

**Abstain: Baez - 1.**

**Bill No. 46-** authorizing the Mayor to renew a lease agreement with Easter Seals of Eastern Pennsylvania for the premises known as Camp Lilly. **(Managing Director) Introduced at the 06/11/07 meeting of Council.**

**Councilor Fuhs moved, seconded by Councilor Baez, to enact Bill 46-2007.**

City Solicitor Younger explained that this agreement will formalize the City's existing agreement with Easter Seals.

**Bill 46-2007 was enacted by the following vote:**

**Yea: Baez, Fuhs, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer President – 7.**

**Nay: None – 0.**

**Bill No. 47-** entering into Agreement with Alvernia College for the lease of improvements made at Angelica Park. **(Managing Director/Solicitor)**  
***Introduced at the 06/11/07 meeting of Council.***

**Councilor Sterner moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to enact Bill 47-2007.**

Managing Director Churchill explained that this 10 year agreement will allow Alvernia to move some of their physical education facilities to Angelica, which will free land space to provide for dormitories and other on campus buildings.

Council President Spencer noted his agreement with public-private partnerships.

Councilor Sterner questioned if issues involving the use of the concession stand have been resolved. Public Works Director Jones stated that the 2 year old issue involving the use of the concession stand has not been resolved. Going forward the concession stand will be operated by the party using the ball field.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if this improvement will compliment the Environmental Park. Public Works Director Jones replied that these facilities are in separate areas.

Managing Director Churchill stated that after the Alvernia funded improvements the cost of repairs and maintenance will be shared by the City and Alvernia.

**Bill 47-2007 was enacted by the following vote:**

**Yea: Baez, Fuhs, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer President – 6.**

**Nay: None – 0.**

**Bill No. 48-** increasing the salary of the Finance Director to \$75,000.00 per year. **(Managing Director) Introduced at the 06/11/07 meeting of Council.**

**Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to table Bill 48-2007.**

**Yea: Baez, Fuhs, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer President – 7.**

**Nay: None – 0.**

**Bill No. 49-** appropriating \$200,000.00 from the General Fund Budget to fund a fire training class for ten (10) individuals. **(Managing Director) Introduced at the 06/11/07 meeting of council.**

**Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Fuhs, to enact Bill 49-2007.**

Managing Director Churchill explained that the addition of 10 firefighters will relieve the stress brought by the existing vacancy of 17 employees in the Fire Department. He stated that the expense should be offset in the 2008 budget through a decrease in the overtime line item expense. He noted the opportunity to satisfy the recent settlement of the Courtney Horne lawsuit at this time.

**Bill 49-2007 was enacted by the following vote:**

**Yea: Baez, Fuhs, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer President – 7.**

**Nay: None – 0.**

**Bill No. 50-** authorizing the Mayor to renew a lease agreement with Alvernia College for the continued use of the Reading Police Academy. **(Managing Director/Solicitor) Introduced at 06/11/07 meeting of Council.**

**Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Baez, to enact Bill 50-2007.**

Managing Director Churchill explained the terms of the lease with Alvernia College.

**Bill 50-2007 was enacted by the following vote:**

**Yea: Baez, Fuhs, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer President – 7.**

**Nay: None – 0.**

**Bill No. 51-** authorizing the conveyance of 1900 Centre Avenue to Colonial Electric Supply and authorizing the Mayor to execute all requisite documents for undertaking this conveyance. **(Solicitor) Discussed at the 05/21/27 Council Work Session; introduced at the 06/11/07 meeting of Council.**

**Councilor Fuhs moved, seconded by Councilor Baez, to enact Bill 51-2007.**

City Solicitor Younger explained that this conveyance will support the expansion of Colonial Electric and provide additional parking at the Stadium.

**Bill 51-2007 was enacted by the following vote:**

**Yea: Baez, Fuhs, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer President – 7.**

**Nay: None – 0.**

**Bill No. 52-** authorizing the permanent revision of existing traffic patterns and regulations, to allow two-way travel northbound on 12th street, between Elm Street to Birch Street. **(Solicitor) Introduced at the 06/11/07 meeting of Council.**

**Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Baez, to enact Bill 52-2007.**

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if the improvement project at the Citadel will provide the broadening of North 12th Street. Public Works Director Jones replied that North 12th Street will not be made wider; however, parking will only be provided on one side of the street, which will provide space for bus loading and unloading.



Council President Spencer questioned the location of the main entrance. Public Works Director replied that the main entrance for bus students is on North 12th Street and pedestrian students will use the entrance on Walnut Street. He added that mid-block pedestrian crossing will be restricted with physical obstructions on North 12th Street.

Councilor Sterner expressed the belief that the Citadel at this location will create a multi-faceted traffic disaster. He noted the need for better planning.

Councilor Waltman agreed and noted the need for continued review of the resulting traffic snarls that occur.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz noted her repeated requests for Public Meetings to educate affected citizens about new traffic patterns in this area, etc.

**Bill 52-2007 was enacted by the following vote:**

**Yea: Baez, Fuhs, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer President – 7.**

**Nay: None – 0.**

**Bill No. 53-** authorizing the permanent revision of existing traffic patterns and regulations, to allow two-way travel westbound on Walnut Street, from 12th Street to Birch Street. **(Solicitor) Introduced at the 06/11/07 meeting of Council.**

**Councilor Fuhs moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to enact Bill 53-2007.**

**Bill 53-2007 was enacted by the following vote:**

**Yea: Baez, Fuhs, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer President – 7.**

**Nay: None – 0.**

## **INTRODUCTION OF NEW ORDINANCES**

Council President Spencer read the following Ordinances into the record:

**Ordinance-** amending the Codified Ordinances Chapter 1, Part 5, by adding a new section "O", creating the City of Reading Diversity Board. **(Waltman)**

**Ordinance-** increasing the salary of Frank Kasprowicz, Library Executive Director to \$67,087.00 per year. **(Managing Director)**

**Ordinance-** increasing the salary range of the Finance Director. **(Managing Director)**

## **RESOLUTIONS**

**Resolution 76-2007-** approving the exoneration of City taxes owed on the property located at 1729 Centre Avenue, which is owned by Total Family Christian Center Inc. **(Council Staff)** *Exoneration hearing held on 05/23/07; tabled at the 06/11/07 meeting of Council.*

**Councilor Fuhs moved, seconded by Councilor Sterner, to adopt Resolution 76-2007.**

Council President Spencer explained the concerns of Council as they learned through due diligence that Total Family Christian Center was not provided with exoneration by the County and School District and that they received an exemption, although they have not applied for a Special Exception zoning permit to allow a church use at this location.

**Resolution 76-2007 was NOT adopted by the following vote:**

**Yea: None – 0.**

**Nay: Baez, Fuhs, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer President – 7.**

**Resolution 78-2007-** promoting Sergeant Stephen D. Powell to the rank of Lieutenant **(Police Chief)**

**Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to adopt Resolution 78-2007.**

Managing Director Churchill explained that this promotion was based on merit and civil service testing. The promotion ceremony is scheduled for tomorrow at 3 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the City is extremely fortunate to have someone with Sgt. Powell's talent, dedication and ability.

**Resolution 78-2007 was adopted by the following vote:**

**Yea: Baez, Fuhs, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer President – 7.**

**Nay: None – 0.**

**Resolution 79-2007-** appointing Alfred Huff to the Environmental Advisory Board. **(Administrative Oversight)**

**Resolution 80-2007-** appointing Neil Brantley to the Environmental Advisory Board. **(Administrative Oversight)**

**Resolution 81-2007-** appointing Stephen Fuhs to represent Council on the Blighted Property Review Committee. **(Administrative Oversight)**

**The Administrative Oversight Committee moved to adopt Resolutions 79 through 81-2007.**

**Resolutions 79 through 81-2007 were adopted by the following vote:**

**Yea: Baez, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer President – 5.**

**Nay: None – 0.**

**Abstain: Fuhs - 1**

### **COUNCIL COMMENT**

Councilor Fuhs stressed the need for the improved training and performance of employees manning the Call Center.

Councilor Marmarou requested permission to leave the meeting. His request was granted.

Councilor Sterner agreed and noted the need for improved follow-up on complaints concerning rental properties.

Councilors Fuhs and Goodman-Hinnershitz noted receipt of mixed reports from those using the Call Center. They stressed the need for the Call Center to provide a seamless approach to complaint resolution.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz highlighted District 2 activities.

Councilor Waltman reported on Council's work on the rental housing issue.

Council President Spencer noted the passing of Ron Rouse, who was a strong advocate for many community issues.

Council President Spencer reported on the opening of the Blacktop Basketball League.

Council President Spencer stated that the Hillside Pool water use issue will be discussed at the RAWA meeting this Thursday.

Council President Spencer stated that he cannot support a capital allocation to BCTV when the City cannot support its own basic public services.

**Councilor Waltman moved, seconded by Councilor Fuhs, to adjourn the regular meeting of Council.**

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Linda Kelleher  
City Clerk